

DRAFT

Young Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2017-2026



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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Young Conservation Area, # 8605
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1986
- **Acreage:** 1,145 acres
- **County:** Jefferson
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Primary Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Provide opportunities for diverse public use; manage the natural communities and other habitats for fish, forests, and wildlife; and help to maintain the integrity of the LaBarque Creek Watershed.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Young Conservation Area (CA) is a healthy, diverse, and sustainable mosaic of stream, woodland, and forest communities; and a network of hiking trails that provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired with Forest Legacy Program funds to protect important working forest areas.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

A. Priority Areas:

- 1) LaBarque Creek Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area
- 2) LaBarque Creek Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area
- 3) Lower Meramec/Missouri River Priority Forest Landscape,
- 4) LaBarque Creek Fisheries Priority Watershed
- 5) The Nature Conservancy's Meramec River Project
- 6) Big River Fisheries Priority Watershed

B. Natural Areas: None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** None

- D. Other:** The conservation area includes 2.4 miles of stream frontage along LaBarque Creek. This area occurs in the Meramec Highlands Oak Woodland/Forest Rugged Hills Land Type Association. This landtype consists of very rugged hills with narrow ridges, steep slopes, and narrow valleys. Historically, this area was timbered with oak and mixed-hardwood woodland, forest, and scattered glades (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Two parking lots, one service parking lot
- Concrete bridge over LaBarque Creek
- Taconic Loop Hiking Trail (2.5 miles)
- LaBarque Hills Hiking Trail (3.5 miles)
- Two fishing ponds (2 acres total)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** Stream Stewardship Trust Funds (Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation) were used to acquire a portion of this area. There is also a Conservation Restriction Agreement that limits certain types of development on a portion of Young CA.
- B. Federal Interest:** This land must protect a forested landscape in perpetuity. Prohibits conversion of land into non-forest uses; a periodic inspection is required to verify this. Federal funds may also be used in the management of this land. Natural resource agencies may not allow activities or development of facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation
- C. Easements:** There are two electric transmission easements and two distribution line easements owned by Ameren Missouri. There is an easement owned by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. An easement is also held by the State of Missouri for Hwy FF.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow best management practices for Cultural Resources found in the Missouri Department of Conservation Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- F. Boundary Issues:** Establishing accurate and identifiable boundary markers is a priority for this property.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Control infestations of invasive plants on the area (e.g., bush honeysuckle) and prevent future infestations.
- 2) A lack of proper management has resulted in overstocked woodlands (i.e., too many trees per acre); a tree species composition shift to shade-tolerant and fire-intolerant trees (i.e., away from oaks and hickories toward primarily sugar maple); and a major loss of diversity and abundance of ground layer herbaceous vegetation and tree regeneration.
- 3) Maintain healthy, sustainable, and diverse forests and woodlands that are approaching maturity and are mostly even-aged.
- 4) Enhance wildlife habitat by maintaining existing warm-season grass fields and converting fescue, sericea, and woody invasive dominated old fields to native vegetation.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy forests and woodlands with management emphasis on wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Control invasive plants (predominantly bush honeysuckle, japanese hop, tree of heaven, and wintercreeper) to avoid significant negative impacts on natural communities. Routinely scout and seek to control invasive plants.

(Forestry)

Strategy 2: Conduct a forest inventory prior periodically to guide forest management activities. Reduce tree stocking in forests, woodlands, and shortleaf pine plantations to desired stocking levels and to desired tree species mixes, as is appropriate for wildlife habitat improvement. Forestry best management practices will guide all thinning projects. (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2014)

(Forestry)

Strategy 3: Utilize management tools such as mechanical thinning of trees and prescribed fire to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in woodlands, to increase oak regeneration in forests and woodlands, and to discourage unwanted vegetation, such as bush honeysuckle. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Reforest open lands where invasive species invasion requires excessive work to maintain native species such as warm season grasses through a combination of natural tree regeneration and mechanical or hand tree planting. Select tree species that are valuable to wildlife and well-suited to the growing site.

(Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Manage existing open lands and old fields to enhance wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Control invasive plants (e.g., autumn olive, fescue, common teasel, exotic thistles, and sericea lespedeza) to avoid negative impacts on natural communities. Routinely look for and seek to control invasive plants. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Remove and thin undesirable tree species growing in and around open areas. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Establish warm-season grasses and other native herbaceous vegetation in open areas to provide diverse wildlife habitat. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Utilize prescribed fire to stimulate herbaceous vegetation in open areas and to discourage undesirable species. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems in the ponds.
- 2) Maintain aquatic biodiversity in area streams.

Management Objective 1: Maintain integrity of the two fishing ponds.

Strategy 1: Improve fish cover with native aquatic vegetation and woody cover, as needed. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Maintain dam integrity through removal of woody plants and burrowing animals. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Conserve LaBarque Creek Watershed's aquatic biodiversity within Young CA streams.

Strategy 1: Implement watershed conservation strategies consistent with the *LaBarque Creek Watershed Conservation Plan* (Meneau, 2009), including maintaining 100-foot wide riparian corridors on all conservation area stream channels, minimizing the number of stream channel crossings, and utilizing appropriate stream crossing best management practices. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Monitor LaBarque Creek fish community biodiversity through periodic Resource Assessment and Monitoring surveys (every three to five years). (Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Young CA offers valuable recreational opportunities such as hiking, hunting, and fishing close to an urban population center.

- 2) The area offers opportunities to build relationships with the public, neighboring landowners, and the Friends of LaBarque Creek watershed group.
- 3) Past and future resource improvement projects offer opportunities for demonstration sites for the public.

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Conduct management activities that will provide habitats for a diversity of fish and wildlife species. (Forestry and Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Ensure that public hunting opportunities are advertised in the annual hunting regulation booklets. (Forestry and Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Maintain walk-in accesses to area streams and fishing ponds. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Facilitate good working relationships with area users and neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors and other groups interested in the watershed to occasionally host volunteer projects and demonstrate appropriate habitat management techniques on the area. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Maintain demonstration areas for ecological restoration and forest thinning.

Strategy 1: Maintain existing signage at ecological restoration sites and the forest thinning site. (Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Variety and intensity of public use requires regular area maintenance and management.
- 2) Communicate with easement holders regarding access and maintenance requirements to maintain utility lines.
- 3) Maintain clear and identifiable boundaries and signs.
- 4) Consider for acquisition parcels that border this area and occur within the LaBarque Creek Watershed or that improve access to the area.

Management Objective 1: Maintain parking lots and trails to provide aesthetics, utility, and hiking opportunities for the public.

Strategy 1: Perform routine maintenance on trails. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Perform routine trash pickup, mowing, sign maintenance, and other maintenance activities. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities to relocate the north parking lot to a site that is more suitable for additional parking. (Forestry)

Strategy 4: Explore opportunities with partners to develop a LaBarque Creek Trail through areas with multiple ownerships. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Ensure requirements of easements are met.

Strategy 1: Regularly communicate with easement holders to know what activities are planned along utility easements and ensure compliance with the easement agreement. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Maintain well marked, accurate boundary lines and area signs.

Strategy 1: Paint boundary trees and maintain signs along boundary lines every four years or as needed. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Continuously maintain area signs. (Forestry)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Aquatic Resource Management										
<i>Objective 1</i>										
Strategy 2		X					X			
Administrative Considerations										
<i>Objective 3</i>										
Strategy 1		X				X				X

APPENDICES

Area Background:

The 1,145-acre Young Conservation Area CA is located in north-central Jefferson County, about 5 miles south of Eureka. The original 970-acre tract was acquired in 1986 from the Hilda Young Family with part of the funds donated by Mr. and Mrs. Edward D. Jones, Jr. Additional tracts were added in subsequent years with a 6-acre donation from Richard and Janet Gleb, utilization of Stream Stewardship Trust Funds and a contribution from the U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Forest Legacy Program.

This property helps to maintain and enhance the ecological and recreational values of the LaBarque Creek Watershed (Meneau, 2009), which supports a high quality stream system and diverse plant communities. The watershed lies in northwest Jefferson County and consists of 13 square miles of land with 44 percent being publicly owned and over 86 percent of the area remaining forested. As a result of the low level of development in the watershed and the protection efforts, the creek continues to support a diverse community of 52 fish species (the most diverse community in the St. Louis area).

The area lies in the Ozark border region with soils derived from limestone and dolomite on the upper slopes and St. Peter sandstone in the valleys. As a result, there are a variety of plant communities, including upland dolomite/limestone woodlands and glades, limestone/dolomite and sandstone forests, and bottomland forests along with pine and bottomland tree plantings, warm-season grass plantings and old fields on the lower slopes. The woods are dominated by oak, hickory, maple, and cedar with an understory of flowering dogwood and redbud.

The area is mostly forested and there are several intermittent streams. Over 2 miles of LaBarque Creek and two fishing ponds are present on the area. Currently, there are 6 miles of trails open to hiking through much of the area.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Forest	520		45
Woodland	500		44
Open Land	105		9
Pine Plantation	16		1
Ponds	2		<1
Other	2		<1
Total	1,145		100
Tributaries to LaBarque Creek		2.95	
LaBarque Creek		2.38	

References:

Meneau, K. J. (2009). *LaBarque Creek Watershed conservation plan*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri forest management guidelines: voluntary recommendations for well-managed forests*. Jefferson City, MO: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographical Map

Figure 4: Vegetative Cover Map

Figure 5: Easement Map

Figure 1: Area Map

YOUNG CONSERVATION AREA

JEFFERSON COUNTY
1145 ACRES

VICINITY MAP

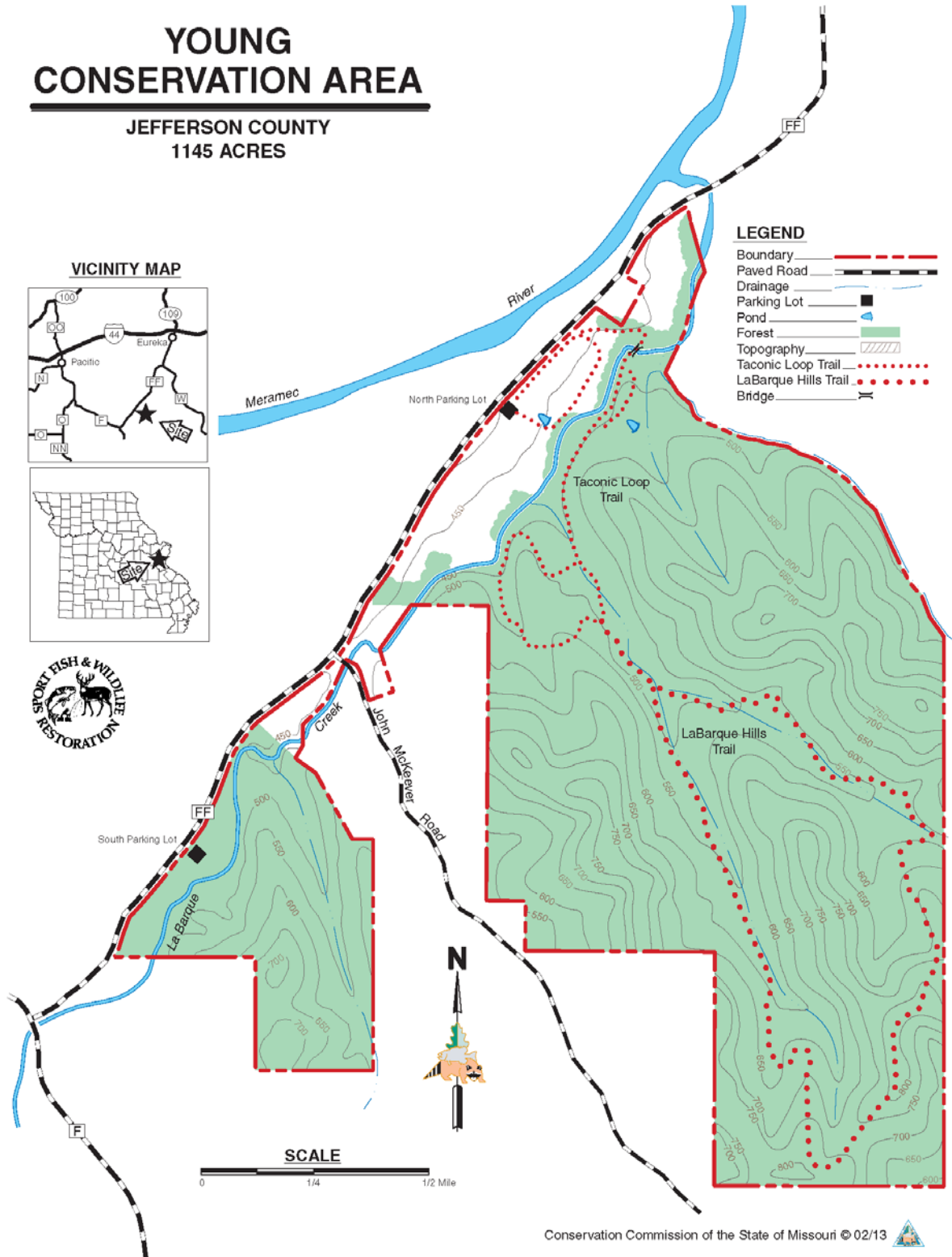
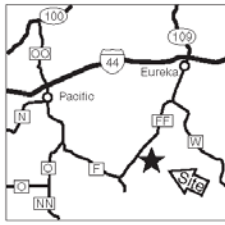


Figure 2: Aerial Map

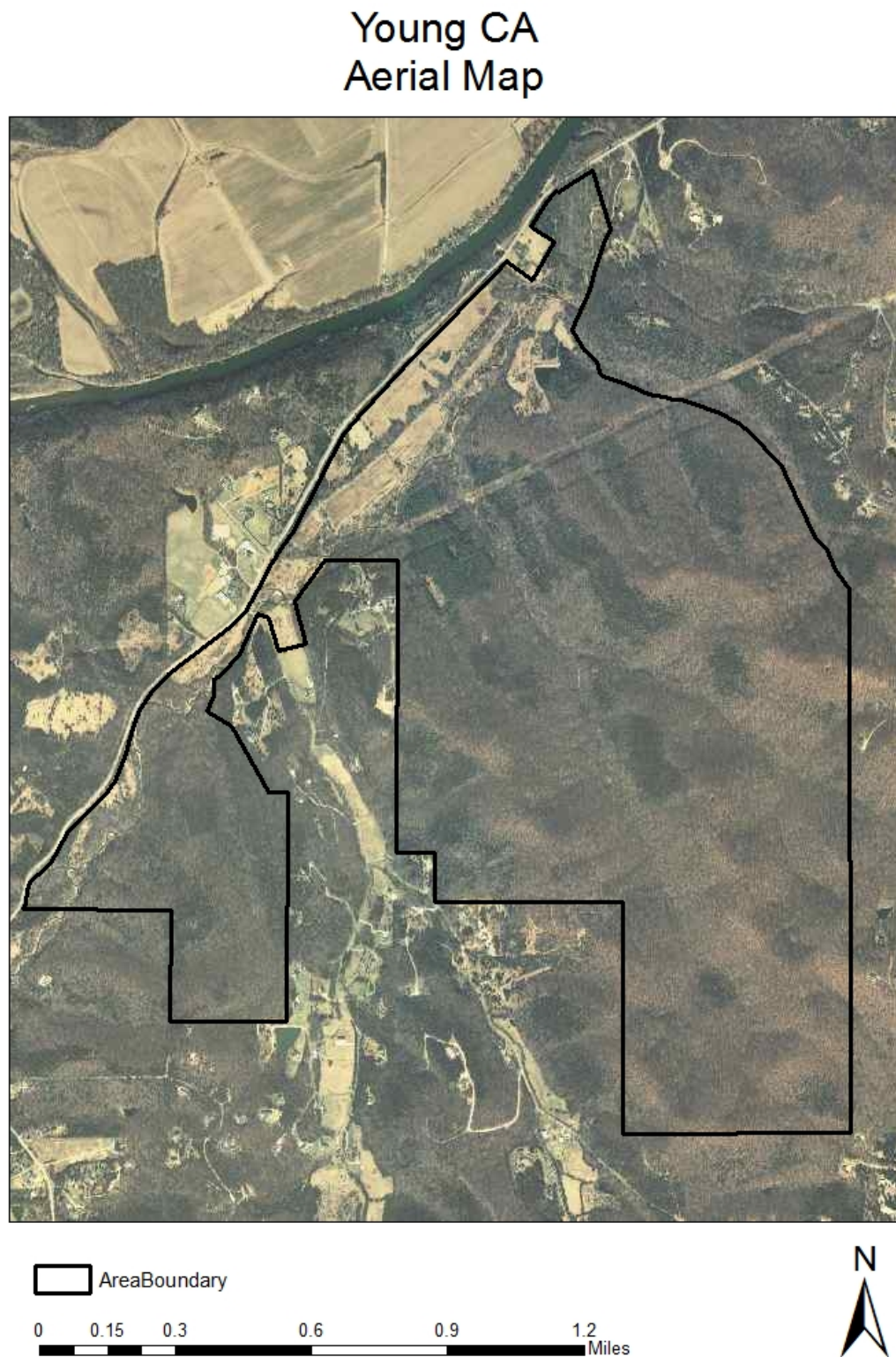


Figure 3: Topographical Map

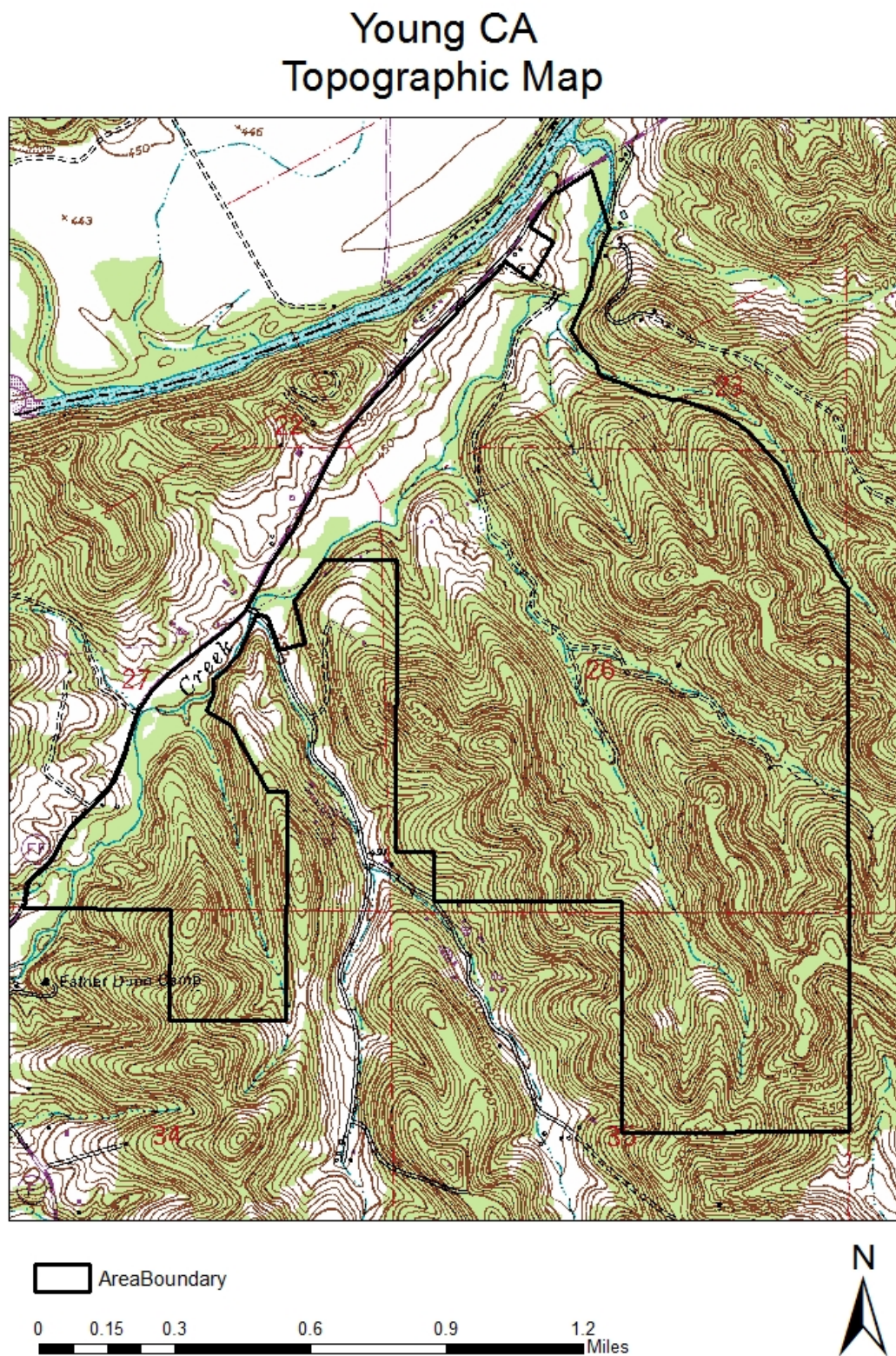


Figure 4: Vegetative Cover Map

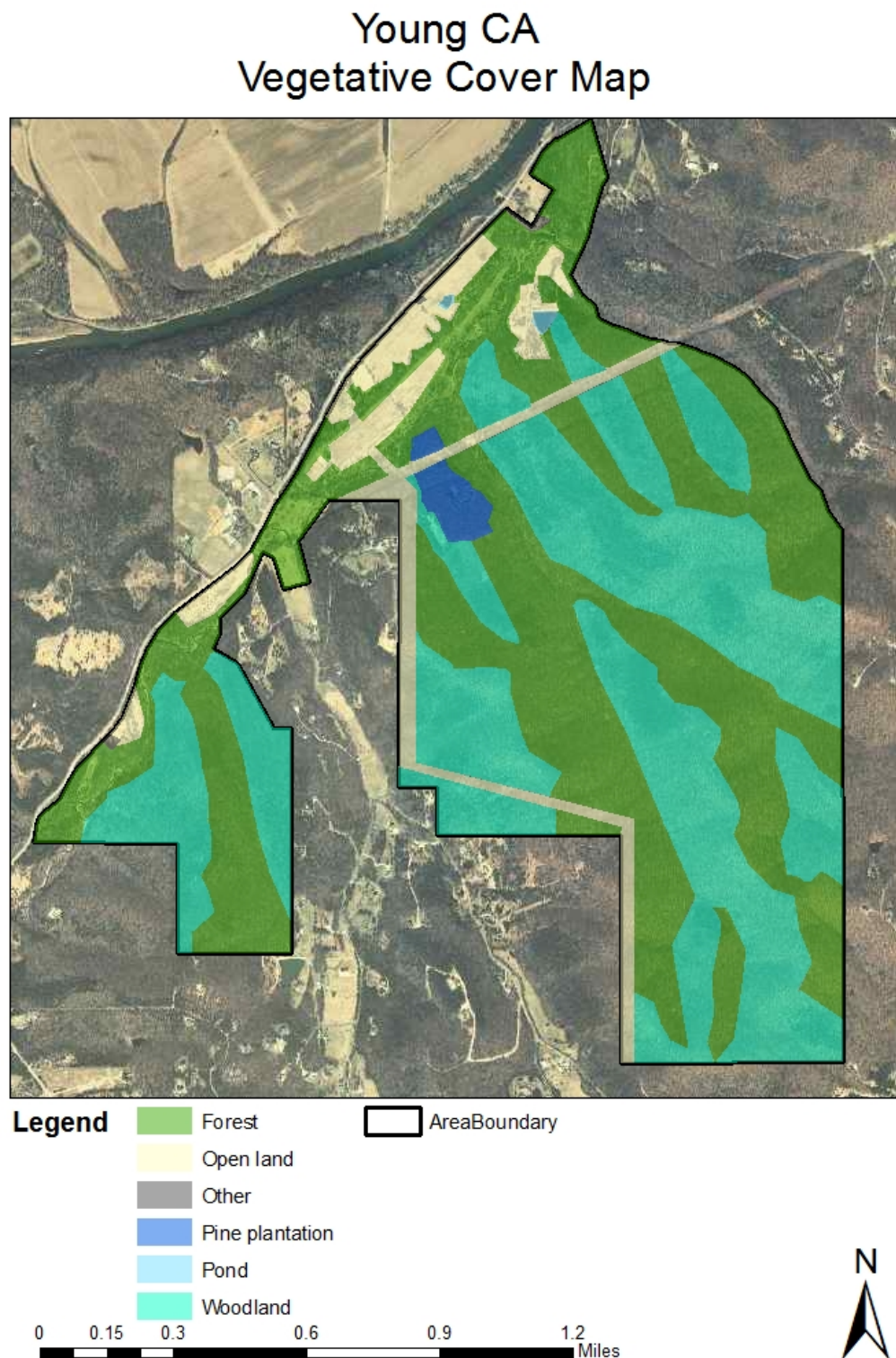
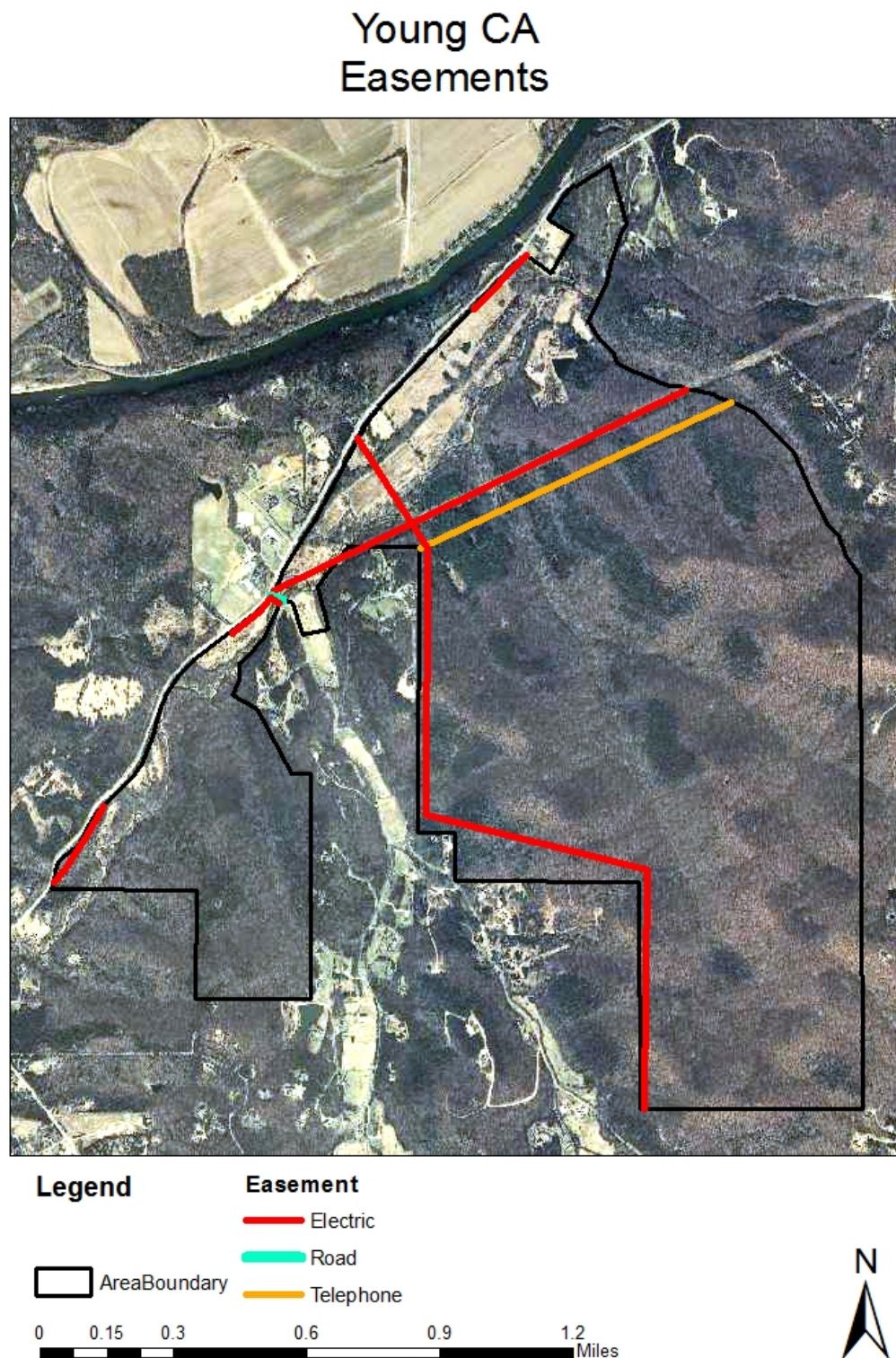


Figure 5: Easement Map



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